

SOCIAL ACTION NEWSLETTER

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BOARD OF TRUSTEES APPROVES C.O. PROGRAM

The board of trustees of The United Christian Missionary Society at its meeting on January 7-8, approved, subject to approval by the commission on budgets & promotional relationships of the International Convention, a recommendation of the department of social education and social action to meet costs which the churches of the Disciples of Christ are expected to assume in connection with conscientious objectors from our churches who are assigned to "work of national importance under civilian direction" as provided for in the Selective Training and Service Act of 1940.

The situation which calls for this action is this: When the Selective Training and Service Act was passed provision was made to assign to "work of national importance under civilian direction" those persons who "because of religious training and belief" are unable to participate in military training or service of any sort. Since Congress failed to provide funds for this alternative service and since these persons have come to their pacifist convictions as a result of the teachings of the church, Sunday schools, young people's conferences, church convention resolutions, and the like, the government has asked the churches to assume responsibility for them. During World War I, no provision was made for exemption or alternative service and many sincere, conscientious Christians were tried by courts martial and sent to military prisons. Quakers, Mennonites, and Dunkers suffered most severely, though there were a considerable number of pacifists of other faiths. Among Disciples of Christ, Harold Gray, son of Mr. & Mrs. Philip Gray of Central-Woodward Ave. church, Detroit, was the outstanding example. As described by Kenneth Irving Brown in his book Character Bad (taken from the certification on Gray's discharge after he had been pardoned by President Wilson after the war) young Gray came to the conviction that war was wrong, unchristian and a violation of the teaching and spirit of Jesus while serving as a YMCA secretary in England. When the United States entered the war and his number came up in the draft, Gray reported to the military, stated his pacifist convictions and was tried by a military court for refusing to obey orders. He was convicted and imprisoned and when he continued to refuse to do military service additional charges were placed against him, resulting finally in a sentence of death. This was commuted by the President and he was sent to Alcatraz. He was not pardoned until a considerable time after the war closed
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UNITED SOCIETY ESTABLISHES NEW DEPARTMENT

At the meeting of the Board of Trustees on January 7-8, action was taken to set up a new department of social welfare in the division of home missions. James A. Crain will serve as executive secretary of the new department in connection with his present position as executive secretary of the department of social education.

When the functions of the Board of Temperance and Social Welfare were taken over by The United Christian Missionary Society it was recognized that many of the functions of that board lay in the field of social action. Consequently this work was set up in the Division of Christian Education as the department of social education and social action. As time went on and experience was gained it became apparent that many of the tasks of social action lay in the field of home missions. This was particularly true where projects were to be undertaken in such areas as that of race relations, migrants and sharecroppers, rural rehabilitation, governmental projects on behalf of the underprivileged, and the like. The field of home missions likewise has been expanding its functions to care for these areas. In the United Society set up the Division of Home Missions had no department to care for these responsibilities, while the Division of Christian Education had such a department but found itself limited because so great a part of social action calls for work which heads up nationally in the Council for Home Missions. The need for organizational shift became particularly clear when the passage of the draft law brought the problem of religious servicemen in the army training camps to the fore. Twenty out of 30 of these camps are located in the South. Many of them are located in or near communities where our churches are weak. If these churches are to render acceptable service to these men they must have some aid. The matter of furnishing that aid lies distinctly in the field of home missions. Yet it is also a problem in social action since it involves efforts to eliminate drink, gambling, vice and other anti-social conditions in communities adjacent to the camps.

After conference between Mr. Crain, Mr. Wickizer, Mr. Swearingen and President Hopkins, a recommendation was brought to the board of trustees of the Society that the social action functions of the department of social education and social action be transferred to the division of home missions and set up as the department of social welfare, with Mr. Crain serving
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NEWSPAPER CHALLENGES FORD WAGE CLAIMS

Declaring that a recent newspaper advertisement ostensibly originating with Ford Motor Company employees was "misleading to the point of factual inaccuracy" and that Henry Ford has abandoned his high wages philosophy of the 1920s, PM, New York newspaper, over the signature of Ralph Ingersoll, its editor, devoted the entire editorial page on Monday, Jan. 13, 1941 to "Henry Ford and the Little Man."

The advertisement referred to was carried by the metropolitan press of the nation a few weeks ago and purported to give figures from Ford employees themselves showing an average hourly wage of 90 cents in Ford plants and an average annual wage of \$1,629.05. The United Automobile Worker, organ of the UAW-CIO, in its issue of Jan. 1, 1941, pointed out that this average hourly wage rate in Ford plants is the minimum hourly rate in certain Detroit plants with which the Union has contracts and that the average hourly rate in Chrysler plants is \$1.06. This journal further points out that the Ford claim that working conditions in Ford plants are so superior that workmen's compensation insurance rates are only 50 cents on each \$100 of payroll is due partly to the fact that Ford carries his own insurance, that workers fear to report minor injuries or to press compensation claims against company lawyers & that injured workers are often switched to other jobs & kept on the payroll until the legal time limit of compensation has expired & then discharged.

The substance of Editor Ingersoll's charge is that Henry Ford, who originated the theory of high wages in order to enable workers to buy products, has abandoned that philosophy and is no longer operating under that theory, that he has abandoned the poor man to the second-hand market and is now centering attention on the medium price field, abandoning also in the process the workers he once sponsored. Ford in recent months has had numerous difficulties with the Union and with the NLRB.

United Society Establishes New Dept. - Con'd.
as executive secretary in connection with his responsibility as executive secretary of the continuing department of social education. The board of trustees gave unanimous approval and the decision became immediately effective. No changes in the by-laws of the United Society will be made until the annual meeting and no budgetary changes are contemplated until the beginning of the next fiscal year on July 1. In the meantime the functions of the new department will be defined, its responsibilities allocated and lines of demarcation between social education and social welfare laid down. It should be emphasized that this organizational change does not mean lessened emphasis upon social education. Its principal significance is that projects in social action will hereafter center in the Division of Home Missions and will be coordinate with church maintenance and evangelism, institutional missions, etc. The department of social education in the Division of Christian Education will continue to carry responsibility for social education in the local church, young peoples' and adult conferences and interdenominationally. This move, it is believed, will put the Disciples of Christ in the advance guard of those religious bodies which are preparing to meet the growing tasks of a new world order.

BRITISH WORKER GROUP DEMANDS A JUST PEACE

Declaring its policy to be that of offering "to the peoples of the enemy a peace of no annexations, no reparations or indemnities, with liberty to all peoples to determine their own destiny" a conference of the radical wing of the British Labor Party was held in London on Sunday, January 12, according to an Associated Press dispatch. Two thousand persons were in attendance representing some 1,500,000 workers, according to one report.

The meeting was led by Denis Pritt, member of the House of Commons, who was expelled from the Labor Party last March because he refused to join in condemnation of Russia's invasion of Finland. Pritt, 53 years old, a lawyer educated at Winchester, one of the most exclusive schools in England, was formerly an associate of Sir Stafford Cripps, now British ambassador to Moscow.

Members of the conference denied Communist connections, though the Communist Party in Britain gave it its support to the conference. Pritt also denied that he & his followers are pro-Hitler, declaring that they have been enemies of the German Fuehrer for years, while "ministers, press lords, bankers & industrial bosses have been licking his boots, endorsing his submarines, financing him, building up his strength and presenting him with one country after another, one armament factory after another."

The conference also adopted a resolution introduced by W.J.R. Squire, former general secretary of the Locomotive Engineers & Firemen's Union, calling for an end to collaboration between Labor Party leaders & the conservatives and for a campaign to establish a "people's government" with power to take over banks, land transport and big industries. Another resolution called for a higher standard of living, adequate air-raid shelters, restoration of all trade - union rights, independence for India, friendship for Soviet Russia, and a "people's peace."

Though regarded as a "rebel" movement that has no significance in the total British picture, 2000 delegates, especially if it is true that they represent anything like a million & a-half workers, cannot be laughed down.

DISCIPLE LEADER RECEIVES AWARD

Disciples of Christ were honored when the Junior Chamber of Commerce of Indianapolis by unanimous vote chose Cleo Blackburn, director of Flanner House, as the recipient of its 1940 Award of Merit as the citizen who rendered the most valuable service to the community during the year. Mr. Blackburn is a product of Southern Christian Institute, Fisk University, Butler School of Religion & Pendle Hill School. This is the first time the award has ever been made to a Negro. Mr. Blackburn was called to the directorship of Flanner House following the death of Henry L. Herod and in the short time he has been in charge he has made an enviable place for himself in the social work of the community. Flanner House, a settlement institution serving the 45,000 Negroes of Indianapolis was originally operated by The United Christian Missionary Society, but is now locally controlled.

ON SOCIAL FRONTIERS

The Social Security board now has more than 62,000,000 men and women employed in industry and commerce on its rolls, according to figures made public on December 31, 1940. Through the social security program these workers are building up protection in old age for themselves and their families. The Board is now approving approximately 1,000 claims per day covering retirement and death of workers. In addition to old age retirement protection, the social security program also provides unemployment compensation for workers in those states which have taken advantage of its provisions. More than 28,000,000 workers are now protected against unemployment in states which have adopted the program. During the year 1940 some \$520,000,000 was paid in such benefits.

A study of advertisements carried by small loans companies in an Indianapolis newspaper, including advertisements of so-called 'remedial' lenders, reveals interest charges as high as 50% per year. The legal rate on small loans in many states is 3 1/2% per month or 42% per year. Meanwhile the Missions Building Federal Credit Union, organized and managed by employees of UCMS and brotherhood boards having offices in Missions Building, have supplied their own credit needs to the extent of more than \$50,000 during the past five and a half years at an interest rate never greater than 1% per month on the unpaid balance. For two years preceding 1940 the rate was 2/3 of 1% and in 1940 it was 1/2 of 1%. Dividends on savings have been paid every year since the first year of organization running from 4% to 6%.

A recent study course dealing with the problems of peace in a war-torn world has been prepared under the auspices of the Commission to Study the Organization of Peace, of which Dr. James T. Shotwell, eminent authority on international problems, is chairman. The course is entitled A Study of the Organization of Peace, and sells for 5 cents per copy. It can be secured from the offices of the Commission, 8 W. 40th St., New York. The pamphlet deals with the sort of a world we want, the new institutions which will have to be created, the nature of the new world order and ideals which must dominate it. Especially valuable are its bibliography and list of suggested reading materials.

The NLRB on January 19 ruled that newsboys who sell The Los Angeles News, Herald, Times, and Examiner are, in effect, employees of the four papers & as such are entitled to collective bargaining rights. The Board overruled the contention that the relationship between the newspapers & the boys is that of vendor & vendee and ordered an election to be held within 30 days to determine whether the boys should be represented by the CIO Newsboys Local Industrial Union. This marks a break in the vicious practice whereby newspaper publishers have been able to evade child labor laws & escape responsibility for providing industrial liability insurance for their carriers & street sellers on the plea that the boys are "little merchants" who are in reality in business for themselves. For years child labor workers have worked to abolish this condition. However a decision by the Board on the same date holding exactly the opposite with reference to newsboys of the Houston (Texas) Chronicle indicates that the L.A. papers may find a way to evade this ruling.

NIEBUHR LAUNCHES ANTI-PACIFIST MAGAZINE

According to the New York Herald Tribune of January 13 a new Protestant magazine, described in the headline as "anti-pacifist" and in the body of the story as "non-pacifist" will be launched by Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr and a group of associates on February 7. The new publication will be known as Christianity and Crisis and will appear as a bi-weekly. Dr. Niebuhr is professor of Christian ethics at Union Theological Seminary.

Associated with Dr. Niebuhr on the editorial board will be C.C. Burlingham, former president of the bar association of New York City, Rhoda McCulloch, editor of The Woman's Press, Dr. John A. Mackay, president of Princeton Theological Seminary, Francis P. Miller, of the Council on Foreign Relations, Dr. Edward L. Parsons, bishop-emeritus of the Protestant Episcopal Church, and Dr. Henry P. Van Dusen, professor at Union Seminary.

Among the sponsors of the publication are Dr. William Adams Brown, Dr. Henry Sloane Coffin, Dr. Harold W. Dodds, president of Princeton University, Sherwood Eddy, Dr. Frank P. Graham, President of the University of North Carolina, Dr. Douglas Horton, Dr. Harold Lynn Hough, Bishop Francis J. McConnell, Dr. John R. Mott, Dr. Justin Wroe Nixon, Dr. Howard Chandler Robbins, Bishop William Scarlett, Dr. Robert E. Speer, Bishop Henry St. George Tucker, & Mr. Charles P. Taft.

In a statement circulated by the sponsors the assertion is made that "In the conflict in Europe and Asia, ethical issues are at stake which claim the sympathy and support of American Christians. By our Christian faith we are committed to the realization of a community of nations founded in justice. We hold that the halting of totalitarian aggression is prerequisite to world peace and order."

FILMS ON CHINA RELIEF AVAILABLE

The Church Committee on China Relief announces the release of two motion picture films dealing with conditions in China. One is called "Stand by China" and the other "China's Will to Live." Each is a one-reel, silent 16 mm. film taking 15 minutes to show. The films are available without cost other than transportation and insurance charges to churches and organizations desiring to take an offering for China relief. Applications for use of the films should be made to the nearest field representative of the Committee listed below, giving first, second and third choice of dates. All offerings taken should be sent at once to the representative from whom the films were secured. To date the Church Committee on China Relief has raised and sent to China something over \$700,000. Funds are disbursed in China through missionaries of the various churches without overhead cost. Need for funds to relieve acute distress continues unabated.

For use of the films write:

Miss Mary Amo, Witherspoon Bldg., Philadelphia.
Rev. W.R. Leete, 18 Asylum St. Hartford, Conn.
Rev. J. H. Price, 129 W. 2nd St., Los Angeles.
Mrs. Beatrice Russell, 105 E. 22nd St. New York.
Rev. P.G. Van Zandt, 72 E. Randolph St. Chicago.
Mrs. E. J. Weekes, 34 Estill St., Berea, Ky.

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He now lives near Ann Arbor, Michigan and devotes his life to improvement of the conditions of the poor.

The point is that Harold Gray came to his pacifist convictions as the result of a process of Christian teaching which began in the church. Yet the church was not prepared to aid him in the hour of his need. The result was that he had to face death alone.

That must not and shall not be the lot of young men in the present situation who because of Christian conviction cannot participate in war. In our convention resolutions, in sermons from our pulpits, in our Sunday school literature, in conferences, conventions, forums and study groups we have taught that war is contrary to Jesus' teaching of brotherhood, universal love and goodwill. If we fail now to stand by them the consequences are incalculable for the church of the future.

The process, in brief, is this: When a conscientious objector is certified by his local draft board as sincere his name is immediately sent to Dr. Clarence A. Dykstra, director of the Selective Training & Service Administration in Washington. Dr. Dykstra's office immediately turns the name over to the National Service Board for Religious Objectors, originally formed by the Friends, Brethren, and Mennonite churches to care for their own C.O.s., but now recognized officially by the government as the clearing agency for all conscientious objectors. The Board will immediately get in touch with the representative of the religious body to which he belongs to ascertain what is to be done with him.

The American Friends Service Committee, the Brethren Peace Committee, and the Mennonite Central Committee are planning a series of camps to provide "work of national importance under civilian direction." The government is cooperating in these projects to the extent of allowing the use of certain camp sites, providing projects, tools, technical supervision, etc., but cannot assume financial support of the C.O. Arrangements have been made whereby certain of these camps will be open to men of other religious faiths.

Since these bodies have the experience and have their projects under way this is preferable to establishing competing camps. The cost will be approximately \$35 per month, per man. No appeal will be made to the churches generally. It is expected that funds will come from the C.O. himself, his family, his associates, the church to which he belongs, and from a selected group of individuals who have indicated their own pacifist convictions by signing the conscientious objector enrollment authorized by the Richmond Convention last year.

The present program is projected upon an experimental basis until July 1. Men will begin to be assigned early in February and it is expected that at least 1200 will have to be cared for by July 1. Should the churches fail in this undertaking there is strong probability that the government will institute a series of military and work camps on the German model in which every young man and woman between the ages of 18 and 24 will be required to spend a year.

GOVERNMENT'S SHARECROPPER PROGRAM SUCCEEDS

The question is frequently asked, "Is the government's program of aid to share-croppers and migrants getting anywhere? Is it doing any good? Is it helping to solve the problem?" Answer to these questions is provided in a report released by the Farm Security Administration covering its projects in Arkansas. During the fiscal year 1939-1940, 17,790 Arkansas families took advantage of the government's standard rehabilitation plan. As a result of the aid thus provided & under the guidance of Farm Security advisors, these families increased their incomes from an average of \$257.08 the year before aid was given to \$490.05 per family, a gain of 91%. The average net worth per family increased from \$330.29 before they went into the program to \$545.50 at the end of 1939, a gain of 65%. These 17,790 families have not only added \$3828,586 to the wealth of their communities, but have increased their own annual incomes a total of \$4,144,516.

According to the FSA, a typical rehabilitation family in Arkansas borrowed \$665.04 and has repaid \$276.74, though the money loaned them does not fall due for four or five years. A part of the program is a general debt adjustment, open to all farmers, under which debts are voluntarily reduced or extended. Since the plan was introduced the debts of Arkansas farmers taking advantage of the program have been reduced a total of \$2,341,532, a scale down of 25%.

Another feature of the program is advice to borrowers on raising and caring for their own food & feed supplies. In the fiscal year 1939-1940 these borrowers produced \$4,799,386 worth of goods for home consumption, as compared with \$2,018,098 the year before going into the FSA program. Some 7,623,193 quarts of fruits and vegetables were canned, an average of 429 quarts per family. Milk production totaled 8,474,440 gallons, an average of 475 gallons per family.

The FSA also helps tenants and sharecroppers to obtain more secure land arrangements, securing written leases in place of verbal agreements. Some 12,408 families have been thus aided, 5,594 of whom have advanced from sharecropper to tenant status.

The survey shows that 25,929 additional families in Arkansas are eligible and in need of rehabilitation loans, but have been unable to get into the program because of limited funds.

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